

BORN AGAIN

By Geri McGhee

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Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3-7, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

Just what does it mean to be "born again?" It cannot be adequately described except to say, a life has been transformed and a person no longer has a desire to live the way he once lived. When we are truly "born again" (saved), we are given the gift of repentance which enables us to turn from sin and causes us to desire obedience to Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says,

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, {he is} a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

A person who has been "born again" understands the change but cannot explain it. A person who has not been "born again" is mystified by the expression and does not have any idea what it means.

It has been estimated by some that 80-90% of persons professing to be Christians have never been "born again", but instead have just given mere intellectual assent to Christ as being the Son of God and the Savior of mankind, have joined a church and been baptized. The Word of God says that Jesus withholds Himself from some people who profess to believe because He knows their true hearts. John 2:23-24 says,

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing, but Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men."

Churches are full of people who talk the talk but do not walk the walk. These are people who have prayed the prayer but who have never had a heart transformation that would enable them to walk the walk. It says in James 2:19,

"You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."

Being "born again" is not "ho hum, God"; neither is it in being "lukewarm", for God says in Revelation 3:16,

"So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."

Neither does being "born again" mean being double-minded for the Word of God says in James 1:7-8,

"A double-minded man will receive nothing from God."

The Bible says in James 1:22,

"If we are just hearers of the Word of God and not doers of the Word we are deluded."

Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Salvation is by grace and not by our good works. We do not obey to be saved but we obey because we are saved. Obedience is a fruit of salvation. Jesus made it pretty clear in John 14:15 who it was that really loves Him when He said,

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

1 John 3:7-9 says,

"Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil... No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin (practice it), because he is born of God."

This past year, I was teaching a Seminar in another state and taught on being "Born Again." I knew probably everyone in that meeting had prayed the prayer to receive Christ as their Savior but I knew most of them were not saved, had never been "born again" and only had a religious spirit. I came away asking God a question: "Lord, how can I tell a person how to be "born again" if they have already prayed the prayer?"

The Lord directed me to the scriptures found in Luke 9:23-24,

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

I love the definition that Derek Prince, a great man of God, gave of the Cross. He said,

"Your cross is not your circumstances, your mate, your children, your bills, your finances, your health, etc., but your cross is where your will crosses God's will."

A person can never be "born again" until they receive Christ as their personal Savior and have come to the place in their life where they are willing to give up their life for Christ's sake. Are we really prepared for what eternal life will cost? It will cost absolutely everything in us that is not of God.

Even some of the disciples quit walking with Jesus when He told them they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood. He said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me. We cannot abide in Christ unless we crucify our flesh (give up our life). In JOH 6:48-66 Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard {this} said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it? But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore."

Some evidences a person has been born again are:

- A changed life (II Corinthians 5:17).
- You love God with all your heart (Matthew 22:37-39).
- Good fruit (Gal. 5:22; Matthew 7:16-24).
- A love for the brethren (I John. 4:8; I John. 3:10-14).
- A hate for this world (Jas. 4:3).
- An overcoming life (1JO 5:4).
- A new heart (Ezekiel. 36:26).
- Obedience (John. 14:15).
- A slave of righteousness (Rom 6:11-18).
- A love of the truth (II Th. 2:10).
- Being led by the Spirit of God. (Romans 8:12-14).
- A witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16).

- Crucified the flesh along with its passions (Galatians 5:24).

The Bible lists some who will not make it to heaven:

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who PRACTICE such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. [emphasis mine]

(Note: "practice" denotes a lifestyle versus an occasional sin.)

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor {the} covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Revelation 22:14-15

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying."

The Bible is clear that we are to examine ourselves to see if we are of the faith. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, it says,

"Test yourselves {to see} if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?" Jesus said: Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Have you been born again?

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